

"CURTIS"

Maj Douglas D. Eliason, MC*

Because of the brief nature of the war and the longer involvement in refugee care, often under adverse conditions, this experience has had a great impact on health care providers. What follows is an essay meant to ventilate some of those feelings. Although written by one person, it represents the feelings of all involved health care providers from the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

You came to us nameless,
so we called you "Curtis."
No parent accompanied you,
some said your mother had died in the shelling.
Near to death, you struggled to breathe.

During the long cold, wet night,
you lay among your fellow villagers
breathing shallow and agonized.
As the first light of day arrived,
you could no longer sustain life and died.

We didn't know where your family was
so we buried you near our camp.
You did not die alone, Curtis,
for we were with you and mourned your departure.

"Curtis" was a 2-year-old Iraqi Shi'ite Moslem child wounded in the March 24, 1991 shelling by Saddam Hussein of the village Suqash-Shuyukh, south of the Euphrates River in Iraq. He was cared for by the clearing station of the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment.

*Family Practice, Heidelberg MEDDAC, APO AE 09102-3304.



Above: Iraqi ward patients. Below: Discussing care.

